7/11/75
W. Post

Church Promises to Probe Charges of CIA Infiltration

By George Lardner Jr.
Washington Post Staff Writer

Sen. Frank Church (D-Idaho) yesterday promised an immediate investigation of charges that the Central Intelligence Agency had periodically "infiltrated" the White House and other executive agencies.

Both CIA Director William E. Colby and the Ford White House strenuously denied the allegations. Colby denounced them as "outrageous and vicious nonsense."

Church, chairman of the Senate intelligence committee, said, "I have learned to refrain from jumping to conclusions" in the Senate CIA investigation thus far, "and therefore an appropriate investigation will be made."

Members of the stalemated House intelligence committee disclosed Wednesday that they had been told of secret evidence that the CIA had a long-standing practice of "penetrating" the White House and other agencies and that the undercover operatives had included a high-level aide to President Nixon.

WILLIAM E. COLBY
. . . "vicious nonsense"

The congressmen also said that the House committee's staff director, Searle Field, after a recent inspection of CIA documents, believed that not even Presidents were aware of the White House "infiltration."

Colby and White House press secretary Ron Nessen insisted that no CIA agent was ever surreptitiously placed on any presidential staff, but they were not entirely clear about the nature of all the CIA assignments at the White House or who at the White House would have known about them.

Speaking with reporters before and after a closed hearing of a House Post Office subcommittee on another issue, Colby said he had "no idea" whether any CIA employees ever had access to the Oval Office.

"What the White House does with the people we detail to them is, of course, the White House's business," the CIA director said.

Nessen said some CIA employees may be working at the

See CIA, A11, Col. 1

On Infiltration

CIA, From A1

White House now, but he insisted that "they are there quite openly." He said at least one is on the staff of the National Security Council and "there may be a handful of others who work elsewhere, doing various things."

"I think we're making a mountain out of a molehill," Nessen protested at a White House news briefing when the issue was raised. He said none of the CIA personnel now at the White House was working "in any hidden or undercover role and I have been told in the past there never has been."

Asked whether the CIA workers reported daily to the spy agency on what they had learned, the White House press secretary said, "as far as I know, no," but did not rule out the possibility.

Asked whether such reports occasionally would be made to the CIA, Colby said only that "they are very clearly instructed that when they go down there, they work for the White House and not the CIA."

SEN. FRANK CHURCH
. . . inquiry "appropriate"

The CIA director drew a blank on the report that the agency's operatives included a high-ranking aide in the Nixon White House, reportedly someone just below the level of the staff director H. R. Haldeman or domestic affairs adviser John D. Ehrlichman.

"I can't identify that reference at all," Colby said.

Colby insisted, however, that the "CIA has never done anything with respect to the White House that's not known to the White House." He said various White House officials would be informed of this or that assignment, but not necessarily the President.

"An individual might be doing a clerical job or something of that nature and the President wouldn't necessarily know about that himself," Colby declared. He said CIA workers carried out "various functions connected with support of the White House from the intelligence community," but did not elaborate.

By contrast, Nessen indicated that "the President and a lot of other people know" of each CIA assignment to the White House. He said, "It shows up on the payroll."

The White House press sec-

retary said his information came from various sources, but declined to identify them. "This is barking up a nonexisting tree," Nessen said. "I believe the people I talked to."

The allegations aired by members of the House committee Wednesday reportedly were based in part on a 1973 in-house compilation of questionable CIA practices made by the CIA inspector general's office.

Church said, "It would be a transgression of the most provocative kind" if the charges were true, but emphasized that he was not in a position to assess them at this point.

"I should think that the agency would refrain from spying on Presidents," Church said.

In other developments yesterday:

• Colby acknowledged he "made a mistake" in reporting to President Ford last December that the FBI had been informed from the outset about an illegal CIA mail-intercept program that began in 1953 and lasted nearly 20 years. The Rockefeller commission, which disclosed that the FBI was not apprised of the operation until several years after it started, stated it "very accurately," Colby said. He added that his report to Mr. Ford, prompted by disclosures in The New York Times, was rushed together in a single day. He attributed the mistake to the fact that this was the information "I was dealing with at the time."

• Church said his committee's investigation of the FBI was being hampered by the failure of the FBI and the Justice Department to supply requested documents concerning a long list of allegations.

As a result, the committee asked Attorney General Edward H. Levi and FBI Director Clarence M. Kelley to appear next week and explain "why two months have passed" since the bulk of the requests were made. Church said Kelley had asked for a chance to tell the committee in turn about the "highly sensitive" nature of documents concerning the CIA-Justice Department relationship that already have been turned over.

Senate committee counsel Fritz Schwarz told reporters that the withheld documents are needed to check out allegations of FBI political abuses, such as the use of secret files, electronic surveillance and break-ins, organization and support of purportedly radical organizations, questionable use of FBI informers, and various disruptive activities.

The Church committee continued its secret hearings into CIA involvement in foreign assassination schemes and murder attempts with testimony from several witness, including former Secretary of State Dean Rusk and Thomas Parriott, a former CIA official who served as executive secretary in the late Eisenhower and early Kennedy years to the "special group," a subcommittee of the National Security Council in charge of covert operations.

Rusk had no comment except to remark on completing his testimony that, "I don't have time to brood about the past."

Apparently sensitive to the point, Church volunteered to reporters, before Rusk testified, that probing the past was not "a pleasant duty" but one that must be performed in hopes of determining whether the CIA was ordered to engage "in this dirty business" by top government officials or whether it was simply an agency "running wild."

Political Use Of CIA Fund By Firm Told

By Brooks Jackson
Associated Press

Ashland Oil, Inc., used some of the money it got from the Central Intelligence Agency for amittedly illegal domestic politcial donations, according to two authoritative sources.

An Ashland spokesman insisted that the CIA had not earmarked the money for political use, but the spokesman admitted that the company may have unintentionally been misleading when it said earlier that the CIA money was "unrelated" to the company's political gifts.

The spokesman conceded that about $50,000, which Ashland got from the CIA in cash in 1968, 1969 and 1971, was mingled with a secret cash fund used by top Ashland officials to make illegal donations. Also put into the fund were hundreds of thousands of dollars secretly siphoned off from Ashland's own overseas operations.

Two sources familiar with the various federal investigations into Ahsland's affairs said some or all of the cash given by the CIA was passed on to U.S. political campaigns. Ashland spokesmen would not deny this, but they pointed out that when the fund was eliminated in1973, it still had more cash in it than the sum of the CIA's cash payments.

The fund was used to make more than $700,000 in donations to Richard M. Nixon, Hubert H. Humphrey, the Democratic Party and others including many still not identified publicly.

The CIA paid Ashland $50,408 in cash and another $48,500 in checks, allegedly to reimburse the company for the salary of a CIA agent carried on Ashland's payroll.

The checks were deposited in a company bank account and apparently did not pass into the political fund, according to a report Ashland filed this week with the Securities and Exchange Commission.